

After Feb 9<sup>th</sup> 1960

TEN

QUESTIONS

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I. What is a Christians' obligation with regard to doctrine and practice over against Christ and his fellow Christians?

A. A Christian's obligation toward Christ.

1. As a Christian he will accept Christ's Word wholeheartedly, without reservation.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10,9.

"When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." I Thess. 2,13.

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard." Col. 1,23.

"Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. 2,7

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." John 12,36.

"Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. 3,12.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 21.

2. As a Christian he will follow Christ's Word implicitly in his life.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8,31.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10,27

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11,28.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5,25.

". . . observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28,20.

"This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." I John 5,3.

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Rom. 12, 2,9.

"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. 12,50.

3. As a Christian he will do all he can to defend the truth of Christ's Word.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." I Thess. 5,20.

"I . . . exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." I John 4,1.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matt. 7,15,16.

B. A Christian's obligation toward his fellow Christian.

1. He is to encourage his fellow Christian to faithfulness.

a. by leading an exemplary life.

"Ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." I Pet. 2,9.



"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5,16.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." John 15,8.

"He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." John 7,38.

b. by brotherly exhortation and admonition.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another." Col. 3,16.

"Exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10,25.

"Exhort one another daily." Heb. 3,13.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6,1.

"If any man obey not our word by this epistle . . . admonish him as a brother." II Thess. 3,14,15.

2. He is to rebuke his fellow Christian when he errs.

a. Private errors are to be privately rebuked.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Matt. 18,15.

"If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him." Luke 17,3.

"Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev.19,17.

b. Public errors are to be publicly rebuked.

"When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. I said unto Peter before them all . . ." Gal. 2,11,14.

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." I Tim. 5,20.

"Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Titus 1,13.

II. What is a Christian pastor's obligation with regard to doctrine and practice over against Christ and his congregation?

A. A pastor's obligation toward Christ.

1. He must be personally faithful to Christ and His Word.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witness. Keep that which is committed to thy trust." I Tim. 6,12,20.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience." I Pet. 3,15.

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." I Tim. 4,16.

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Titus 1,9.

"In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned." Titus 2,7,8.



2. He must preach and teach Christ's word faithfully.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim. 4,2.

". . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Mt.28,20.

"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Titus 2,1.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Gal. 1,10.

B. A pastor's obligation toward his congregation.

1. As an ambassador for Christ, he must feed the flock with truth, as he is called to do.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly." I Pet. 5,2.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20,28.

"We preach Christ crucified . . . unto them which are called . . . Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I Cor. 1,23,24.

". . . determined not to know nay thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I Cor. 2,2.

"Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28,20.

2. As an ambassador for Christ and an undershepherd, he must guard the flock from error.

"I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." Ezek. 3,17.

"(See Acts 20,28 above) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20, 28-31.

"(See II Tim. 4,2 above) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . They shall turn away their ears from the truth . . . But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." II Tim. 4,2-5.

"They watch for your souls, as they that must give account." Heb. 13,17.

"He that is spiritual judgeth all things." I Cor. 2,15.

(NOTE: It is understood, of course, that many of these passages will overlap because everything the Bible says concerning the conduct of Christians in general applies also to the pastor; and much of what the Bible says concerning the conduct of pastors applies also to the Christian layman and laywoman and child.

There are also other passages which deal with the matter at hand. Some of them will be quoted in answer to later questions and are, therefore, not being listed under questions I and II in order to make this as brief as possible.

Every communicant and catechumen is encouraged to study these passages thoroughly; for they are basic to the matter that disturbs us in the Church at large and at home, not only with regard to the disturbance in the synod, unionism, and the "one-church" movement, but also with regard to all matters of doctrine, practice, and church discipline that arise from time to time.

Enlighten our minds, we beseech Thee, O God, by the Spirit which proceedeth from Thee, that, as Thy Son hath promised, we may be led into all truth. Amen.



### III. What is necessary for church fellowship?

#### A. In the invisible Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

##### 1. Here only faith in the doctrines essential to salvation is necessary.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2, 19-22.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12, 5.

"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23, 8.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16, 16.

##### 2. Because faith lies in the heart, this fellowship is known only to God Himself.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17, 20, 21.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10, 14, 27.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." II Tim. 2, 19.

#### B. Among visible church bodies, synods, congregations and individual Christians.

##### 1. Here agreement in public doctrine and practice, based upon God's Word, is also necessary.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." I Cor. 1, 10.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; . . . that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." I Pet. 4, 11.

"The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Jer. 23, 28.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8, 20.

##### 2. This fellowship is recognized by men because it deals with public preaching, teaching, creeds, confessions, policies, and resolutions.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." II John 9. I John 1, 3

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10, 23-25.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another." James 5, 16.

"I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you." Eph. 1, 15, 16.



#### IV. When must Christians forego fellowship among visible churches?

##### A. When the public doctrine and confession of an individual or of a church body does not agree with the Holy Scriptures, or when God's truth and error are allowed to co-exist.

"In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Mt. 15,9.

"Beware of false prophets . . . by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7, 15-20.

"Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say: He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Jer. 23, 31-32.

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw myself." I Tim. 6,3-5.

"If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. 1,9.

"Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. 16, 17-18.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." II John 9-11.

##### B. When the practical church life of an individual or of a church body does not agree with the public teachings and confessions on the basis of which fellowship was formed.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 31-32.

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." I John 1,6.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3,3.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." II Thess. 3,6.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. 5,11.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." II Cor. 6, 14-18.



V. How have these Biblical principles of fellowship been applied by us in the past?

A. We have declared and exercised pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship with those church bodies whose public doctrine and practical church life is in complete agreement with ours and the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

1. Early in the history of the Lutheran Church in America, this fellowship included the Ohio and Norwegian Synods, who joined with the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Minnesota Synods to form the Synodical Conference in 1872.
2. The Ohio Synod resigned from the Synodical Conference in 1881 because of a difference regarding the doctrines of Election and Conversion. Two years later the Norwegian Synod loosened its ties to a certain extent. Later this synod reached agreement with other synods not in fellowship with the Synodical Conference and merged with them in 1917. A small number of pastors refused to join this merger and joined the Synodical Conference in 1920 under the name "The Norwegian Synod of the American Lutheran Church. (In the past it has been affectionately called by us "The Little Norwegian Synod." Its official name now is the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, ELS). The Ohio Synod later joined the Iowa and Buffalo Synods to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC). The larger Norwegian Synod, now known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC), in 1930 joined the ALC, the Augustana Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Danish Lutheran Church to form the American Lutheran Conference. This year another closer federation is expected to be formed between the ALC, the ELC, and the UELC (Danish), which will be known as The American Lutheran Church (TALC). The Lutheran Free Church has so far not entered this merger. The Augustana Synod is spreading out to join the United Lutheran Church and others.
3. Since 1917, then, we have exercised fellowship only with those who remained in the Synodical Conference: The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and the Slovak Synod.

B. We do not exercise church fellowship with other Christian churches (Protestant and Catholic), nor with Lutheran synods outside the Synodical Conference,

1. because their public doctrine is not in perfect agreement with the Holy Scriptures,
2. because their practical church life does not agree with the Lutheran Confessions, or
3. because truth and error are permitted equal status in their midst.

(See passages under Question III and IV)

VI. What has disturbed the fellowship we have enjoyed in the Synodical Conference?

A. With regard to the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod -

1. Missouri, since 1935, has been negotiating with the ALC towards possible union, even though the ALC officially says, "It is neither possible nor necessary to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines," and "There is a wholesome and allowable latitude (difference) of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God."
2. In 1950, Missouri accepted the Common Confession as a settlement of the differences between itself and the ALC. (Since the ALC will be out of existence after this year, Missouri has stated that the Common Confession will no longer serve as a "functioning basic document toward the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship with other church bodies." At the same time, however, it said in 1956 "that the Common Confession . . . be recognized as a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.")
3. In 1944, the Missouri Synod officially left its former Scriptural position against scouting organizations by permitting congregations within its midst to tolerate or form scout troops. At its last convention in 1959, it reaffirmed this compromising policy as being "sound and realistic."



4. For over ten years Missouri has cooperated with the liberal National Lutheran Council in matters which are admittedly no longer in the field of "externals," but which are cooperation in spiritual matters. This was done in connection with refugee work, in its armed forces communion agreement with the NLC, and now it is reported that the LC-MS will meet with NLC representatives to discuss the possibility of even wider cooperation, even though they are not in fellowship. Two months ago the Missouri Synod's Board for Home Missions also applied for membership in the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches (NCC), which is made up of many denominations besides Lutheran.
5. Because we are dealing with the corporate and official body of the Missouri Synod, we shall omit references to the many offences on the part of individuals in its midst. (These can happen in any church body and can be overlooked, if they are properly dealt with, which is not always the case in Missouri) (nor in Wisconsin, for that matter). The cause for the disturbance in the Synodical Conference is nicely summed up in the Wisconsin Synod's resolutions of 1953 and 1955: "We declare that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
  - b) by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices (the Common Confession, joint prayer, scouting, chaplaincy, communion agreement with the National Lutheran Council, cooperation with unorthodox church bodies in matters clearly not in the field of externals; negotiating with lodges and Boy Scouts of America with the plea that this gives opportunity to bear witness, under the same plea taking part in unionistic religious programs and in the activities of unionistic church federations; negotiating for purposes of union with a church body whose official position it is that it is neither possible nor necessary to agree in all matters of doctrine and which contends for an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teachings of the Word of God) has brought about a break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister Synod."
6. The entire matter centers in the term "unionism", that is, uniting or fellowshipping or cooperating in spiritual matters with individuals or churches not perfectly agreed with us in doctrine and in practice.

B. With regard to the Wisconsin Synod -

1. The Preamble to the 1955 resolutions in matters of church union (Proc., p. 82-86), included the above conclusion (A,5), which was arrived at after much careful study of the reports of the Church Union Committee which had been dealing with the problem since 1939. Several months before the 1955 convention, the Union Committee had stated its conviction by reporting: "We have, however, arrived at the firm conviction that, because of the divisions and offenses that have been caused, and which have until now not been removed, further postponement of a decision would be a violation of the apostolic injunction of Romans 16,17 (I beseech you, brethren, ~~mark~~ mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them). At the convention this committee issued another report which said, in part: ". . . no indication that divisions and offences . . . will be removed; no change on the part of the Mo. Synod; our testimony is being openly repudiated; . . . complete and unconditional denial . . ." The president, in his report to the convention, said: "We have reached the conviction that through these differences divisions and offences have been caused contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. And when that is the case, the Lord our God has a definite command for us: 'Avoid them!'"

On the basis of these reports and statements, the delegates at the convention unanimously adopted the Preamble containing the charges against divisions and offences of long standing (Cf. Proceedings 1939, p.159; 1941, p.43f; 74ff; 1947, p.104ff; 1949, p.114ff; 1951, p.110ff; 1953, p.95ff). On this basis, the convention applied Romans 16, 17 to the Missouri Synod, but the majority voted to postpone final action on this resolution for a year.



The reason given for this postponement was: "This continues to heed the Scriptural exhortations to patience and forbearance in love by giving the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod opportunity to express itself in its 1956 convention." Yet the same convention evidently felt that further admonition was not only unnecessary but impossible, for it resolved "to discontinue its participation in the committees appointed by request of the Synodical Conference."

2. At its recessed convention in 1956 (Proc. pp. 70.71), the Church Union Committee reported that "the controversial issues listed under 1,b of our Synod's 1953 resolutions in themselves still remain wholly unresolved" and that "the sister synod's position . . . has not undergone any change." The floor committee of the convention agreed with this observation and added, "We deplore the specific resolutions which our sister synod passed . . . and the fact that several other issues were not acted upon at all." Yet the majority of Wisconsin resolved to remain in fellowship, but on a vigorously protesting basis. (II Thess. 3, 14.15)
  3. At the regular convention of 1957 in New Ulm, the Church Union Committee again reported: ". . . the controversial issues still remain wholly unresolved and continue to cause offense," and ". . . the Missouri Synod representatives were not ready to declare the issues between us divisive." The floor committee of the convention recognized this continuation of offenses and felt "conscience-bound to declare publicly, that these principles, policies, and practices create a division between our synods . . ." This committee recommended that the Wisconsin Synod terminate fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The majority defeated this recommendation and the "vigorously protesting fellowship" was to be continued.
  4. Last August at Saginaw, <sup>the union committees</sup> reported on several items that are still disturbing the relationship between the two synods, some of which were not acted upon by the delegates at all. In spite of the fact that Wisconsin had said in 1957: "We are not ready to stand committed to the contention 'That the Common Confession, 11. be recognized as a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Confessions,'" and in spite of the fact that the Missouri Synod last summer elevated this document, together with the ACDP Report (which denies that the Pope is the AntiChrist), to the status of public doctrine in its synod, the Common Confession was not mentioned in the reports to the convention. While the Missouri Synod had not yet accepted the Joint Union Committee's Statement on the Antichrist, which it had the opportunity to do, (This Statement and the ACDP Report are at odds), that synod did pass a resolution to hold its pastors, teachers, and professors "to teach and act in harmony with" "every doctrinal statement of a confessional nature adopted by Synod as a true exposition of Holy Scriptures." This resolution includes also the ACDP Report and the Common Confession. In spite of all this, the Wisconsin delegation adopted a resolution which states that: "The unifying power of the Word of God has brought about agreement in . . . the Statement on the Antichrist adopted by all contingents of the Joint Union Committees," and rejoices because of it.
- The Church Union Committee also reported that Missouri's resolution reaffirming its position on scouting "is the language of one who is demanding recognition for his stand." The convention committee reminded the delegates that "many of the offenses of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod . . . which are named in our 1955 Saginaw Resolution (p. 85) have not been removed and have been aggravated by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's reaffirmation of their position on Scouting." In spite of these continuations of offences, which were once considered sufficient to demand termination of fellowship, the majority of delegates voted to remain in vigorously protesting fellowship with the LC-MS.
5. Of an even more serious nature is the adopted resolutions of Committee No. 23. By adopting this report the majority of Wisconsin accepted officially the new fellowship principle it has been following since 1955, namely,
 

"Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error."



In accepting this new fellowship principle, those who submitted the memorial "A Call for Decision" (of which your pastor is one), those <sup>who</sup> are in sympathy with this memorial and other memorials of a similar nature, - and these are in the minority - maintain that the delegates of the convention were hasty and premature in their action. We maintain that, thereby, the Wisconsin Synod has officially overthrown the principles of church fellowship which the Scriptures declare, which it formerly upheld, which are taught in its Catechism, and which we have consistently taught and endeavored to follow in connection with practical church life, namely,

"Termination of church fellowship is called for when Scriptural correction has been offered and rejected and the erring brother or church body have continued in their error despite admonition. This is the persistence which distinguishes an errorist (Romans 16, 17-18) from an erring brother (Galatians 2, 11-14).

It was the fervent hope and prayer of the minority that the delegates to the convention would at least recognize that there is a serious division in the Wisconsin Synod and that they would provide for a thorough investigation of the charges made in "A Call for Decision" before passing judgment. But the delegates saw fit to "disavow the serious and repeated charges" both with regard to language and content.

After "disavowing the charges" the Wisconsin Synod showed itself prepared to continue along the course of these new fellowship principles by appointing a committee to meet with those, whose Scriptural position it has disavowed, with the evident intent of converting the signers and their sympathizers to its official position, since the majority of this committee is directly involved in the charge and will be expected certainly to uphold its own and the synod's position.

(Note: We had hoped that by today you would have in your hands the Proceedings of the last convention, so that you could study "A Call for Decision" and other related memorials in their entirety. At least two other congregations in the area have received theirs, but ours have not yet arrived.)

6. Although the synod claims to be in a state of "vigorously protesting fellowship" over against the Missouri Synod at present, basing its position on II Thess. 3, 14, 15, the majority still continues in pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship with Missouri, especially on an official level. This confusing practice is defended in an "Open Letter" from the President, dated Nov. 20, 1953: "As long as the Synod has not definitely severed all fellowship relations, I do not feel conscience-bound to avoid praying with Missourians at these meetings." There is no evidence that this position has changed; in fact, there is evidence to the contrary. Pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship are being carried on to this day by officials of Wisconsin and by other pastors and congregations following their example, for instance, Joint Union Committee meetings, joint Reformation Day services in the Twin Cities and other areas, joint Preaching-Teaching-Reaching evangelism programs in Michigan. These are only a few examples; undoubtedly there are more that are not generally known.

This practice is directly opposed to the application Prof. Meyer of the Seminary made of this passage in 1950, and published in the theological journal of the Wisconsin Synod as true and correct: "Paul thus conceives of the case as not yet having come to a complete rupture . . . Regarding church life his instruction is very definite: have nothing to do with him -- no pulpit and altar fellowship, no prayer fellowship, nor even an occasional joint prayer. And this in spite of the fact that the break has not been consummated, and they still regard him as a fellow believer. In this way they will show real brotherliness. They will show real brotherly concern. They will show how serious his error is in their estimation, while an occasional joint prayer would, to say the least, take the edge off their testimony . . . That mode of procedure truly is, as Paul expresses in the next verse (15), admonishing him as a brother, and not treating him as an enemy. That is true love toward God, toward our Savior, toward God's truth, and toward the erring brother. There is hope of bringing him to his senses, when he sees how deeply we are grieved, so that we cannot pray together with him."



VII. What has been done to correct this disturbing situation in the Synodical Conference?

A. Following the Lord's instructions, the Wisconsin Synod has repeatedly, patiently, and fraternally offered Scriptural correction and admonition to the erring Missouri Synod.

1. When Missouri took steps in 1938 to join the ALC, which held to the false fellowship principle that "it is neither necessary nor possible to agree on all non-fundamental doctrines," Wisconsin offered the admonition that "under existing conditions, further negotiations for establishing church fellowship would involve a denial of the truth and would cause confusion and disturbance in the Church and ought therefore be suspended for the time being." (1939 Proc. p. 61) And since 1939, Wisconsin "has not ceased to warn and admonish the sister synod with monotonous though tragic regularity." (Prof. M. Lehniger)
2. In 1941, in an effort to convince Missouri of the danger involved in its chaplaincy program, Wisconsin unanimously adopted this resolution: "The commissioning of Army and Navy chaplains by our Synod would conflict with Scriptural principles and established Lutheran practice." (1941 Proc. p. 77)
3. In 1943, Wisconsin intensified its admonition regarding negotiations with the ALC by addressing a memorial to Missouri, asking her to halt negotiations as long as the ALC held to its false fellowship principle.
4. When Missouri abandoned its former position on Scouting by stating in 1944 that the matter "should be left to the individual congregation to decide," thus giving the movement a clean bill of health, Wisconsin offered admonition by adopting a thoroughly Scriptural set of theses on Scouting in 1947. (Proc. p. 106 ff.) This, too, was adopted unanimously after long and careful study.
5. Since the old offences still continued and new ones had arisen, particularly with regard to spiritual cooperation between churches not in fellowship, a distinction between prayer fellowship and joint prayer, the contention that Rom. 16,17 does not apply to errorists in the Lutheran Church, and others, Wisconsin addressed six questions to the Missouri Synod by which to continue admonition. At the same time Wisconsin said: "With deep concern we note that the ties which have united us particularly with the Synod of Missouri are being loosened." (Proc. 1949, p. 145).
6. When Missouri in 1950 adopted the "Common Confession" as a settlement of the differences between itself and the ALC, Wisconsin carefully studied the document in congregations, conferences, and districts. It was studied again by the delegates at the New Ulm Convention of 1951 and was unanimously rejected as "inadequate" to fulfill the purpose for which it was intended and that it "created a basically untruthful situation." Furthermore, since Wisconsin considered Missouri's answers to the six questions of 1949 as "in part conditional, in part incomplete, and sometimes evasive," if appropriate action were not forthcoming beforehand, Wisconsin felt, "constrained to carry the issue to the Synodical Conference at its next regular convention." (1951 Proc. p. 148).
7. At that convention, which was held in 1952 at St. Paul, the Wisconsin delegation declared themselves to be in a state of confession, or protesting fellowship, because they felt that the issues had not been met at all.
8. When no favorable action was taken by Missouri at its 1953 convention with regard to specific requests of Wisconsin, Wisconsin adopted the unanimous report of its Floor Union Committee, stating that Missouri had "brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister synod," and that they approved the Protest of the delegates at St. Paul in 1952.
9. Not only to inform its own membership of these serious disturbances, but also by way of further admonition, Wisconsin printed and distributed the eleven tracts, "Continuing in His Word."



10. When it became evident in 1955 that the prevailing situation remained unchanged, that its testimony was "being openly repudiated by Missouri Synod representatives," that there still was "no indication that the divisions and offences" would be removed, that its objections were met by a "complete and unconditional denial," Wisconsin unanimously adopted this statement: "A church body which creates divisions and offences by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture also becomes subject to the indictment of Romans 16,17,18. The Lutherna Church - Missouri Synod has by its official resolutions, policies, and practices created divisions and offences both in her own body and in the entire Synodical Conference. Such divisions and offences are of long standing." (1955 Proc., p. 85).

THIS WAS THE CLIMAX. And here is where Wisconsin also began to retreat from its former Scriptural position. (Some feel that this retreat began already in 1953, when the formal declaration was first drawn up.)

11. Committee meetings with Missouri representatives were cut off; a "wait and see what Missouri will do" policy was adopted. Because some saw a "ray of hope" at Missouri's 1956 convention, Wisconsin went back to a "vigorously protesting fellowship" (II Thess. 3,14,15), at its special convention of 1956, in spite of "the fact that the question of unionism and the controversial issues listed in our Synod's 1953 resolutions in themselves still remained unsolved," in spite of the fact that Missouri passed specific objectionable resolutions "on the issues of Scouting and Military Chaplaincy," and in spite of the fact "that several other issues were not acted upon at all." (1956 Proc. pp. 74,75).
12. New committees were set up, whose intended purpose it was to admonish Missouri further, but whose activities have degenerated to mere negotiation. Numerous questions were officially addressed to Missouri representatives, whose answers showed the Union Committee that "the issues raised by the Common Confession must still be considered as forming a definite part of the status controversiae (point of controversy) existing within the Synodical Conference." These answers also showed that the 1956 "ray of hope" in most cases was unfounded. Consequently the Floor Union Committee felt conscience-bound to advise severance or termination of fellowship. Their report was defeated; and the "vigorously protesting fellowship" continued, as did also all the offences in Missouri against which they were protesting.
13. Last fall, (as you are now able to read for yourselves) it seems the issue of the Common Confession was entirely forgotten (except that Missouri has now elevated it to the position of public doctrine). Resolution No. 2 states that "Many of the offences ... which are named in our 1955 Saginaw Resolution have not been removed and have been aggravated!" On page 173 we are told that "It is to be regretted that, while action on the 'Statement on the Antichrist' was deferred, the approval of the Report of the ACDP ... was reaffirmed." The next page brings us the conclusion that Missouri is speaking "the language of one who is demanding recognition for his stand" by stating "that the policy adopted by Synod (MO.) in 1944 is sound and realistic." Any offences that had been removed were offences that have arisen since 1955. The original offences, it cannot be denied, not only still continue but some of them have been aggravated. In spite of this unchanged condition, Wisconsin again resolved to remain in "vigorously protesting fellowship." (P.196).

SO WISCONSIN IS STILL TODAY CARRYING ON THE "ADMONITION" WHICH IT BEGAN IN 1939. Who will venture to say that Wisconsin has not dealt with patience and brotherliness?

(Note: It should be mentioned that admonition and correction was offered, not only by means of synodical resolutions, but also by means of mixed conferences, committee meetings, and personal contact, and a great volume of official and private correspondence.)



B. Following the Lord's instructions, the minority in Wisconsin has repeatedly, fraternally, and patiently offered Scriptural correction and admonition to the erring majority of the Wisconsin Synod.

1. Already in 1953, when Wisconsin formally declared that Missouri had "brought about the present break in relations," some felt this to mean that Missouri had rejected Scriptural correction and that it was continuing in its error despite admonition. Consequently, a proposal was offered to the convention advising the application of Romans 16, 17 to the Missouri Synod and the termination of fellowship. The matter was not settled at this time but referred to a special convention later in the year, where the substitute proposal was defeated and the original resolution to remain in a state of confession carried. Those who spoke in support of the substitute proposal, however, were already offering Scriptural correction and admonition to the Wisconsin Synod. (1953 Proc., pp. 104-106).
2. According to the Union Committee reports of 1955, the men who were closest to the entire matter had arrived at the firm conviction that "further postponement of a decision would be a violation of the apostolic injunction of Romans 16,17," and presented a resolution advising Wisconsin to terminate fellowship. This, too, was by way of Scriptural admonition to the convention delegates. Consequently, the convention unanimously adopted the statement referred to in No. 10 above. But the majority decided to defer termination of fellowship for at least a year by a vote of 94 to 47. Most of those 47 delegates, voting and advisory, requested that their "No" vote be recorded in the minutes as protesting the resolution to defer, after having debated the matter on the floor for hours. This debate and these recorded negative votes were offered as Scriptural correction and admonition to the majority in Wisconsin. (1955 Proc., p. 87.88).
3. Before the recessed convention of 1956, several written protests against the action of 1955 were directed to the Wisconsin Synod, which may be "summarized in the statement that 'avoid them' in Romans 16,17 does not permit a delay, but as soon as the 'divisions and offences' are 'marked'". In spite of this Scriptural admonition and because some saw what appeared to be a "ray of hope" in intersynodical relations, the majority of delegates voted to continue fellowship even though the offences in Missouri also remained unresolved. (1956 Proc., pp. 64-75) (Note: These proceedings came to you in conjunction with the Minnesota District proceedings of the same year. You will find them at the end of the book.)
4. The matter was of course taken up in District Conventions which were postponed in order that the districts might hear the reports regarding Missouri's convention. In our district, 15 delegates recorded their negative vote when the majority of the district adopted this sentence: "We recommend that the Synod does not at this time terminate its fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod." These negative votes at the District Convention were recorded only after much fraternal admonition had been offered to the brethren present. The actual number voting against the above sentence was 26. Your pastor was among those who gave his reason for his recorded negative vote. (Dist. Proc., 1956, p. 52-53).
5. At New Ulm in 1957, the Union Committee reported Missouri interpreted its 1956 resolutions differently than the majority of Wisconsin's official observers had. Consequently, the original "ray of hope" was dimmed considerably. (Note: The "ray of hope" came into being mainly because of the "impressions" of the majority of the Union Committee in 1956. Others were convinced that the resolutions of Missouri extinguished any such "ray of hope.") In the meantime, protests and memorials had been flowing through the proper channels, admonishing Wisconsin to terminate fellowship because of the unchanged situation. Three such memorials were from entire districts and some from individuals or groups of individuals. After studying the matter thoroughly, the Floor Union Committee decided to heed the admonition and advised the synod to terminate fellowship. But in spite of this Scriptural admonition from its committees and from several districts and individuals, the majority voted to reject the report, 77-61, and the vigorously protesting fellowship continued. Looking upon this action as a



rejection of the Scriptural correction and admonition they had offered, several leading delegates either terminated fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod or else loosened the ties that had bound them together. A few pastors and congregations had severed the bond earlier already. (1957 Proc., pp. 130-148).

6. Between 1957 and 1959, a flood of Scriptural admonition was received by the committee set up for this purpose (Protest Committee) and by the officials of the Synod. In our own District Convention of 1958, 47 delegates voted to advise the synod to terminate fellowship with Missouri, 26 of which registered their votes. (1958 Dist. Proc., pp. 51-53). But the majority prevailed in a matter which Scripture decides.
7. By last August, at least ten memorials were forwarded to the delegates at the convention, in addition to the volume of protests the mails had carried previously and the Scriptural correction and admonition that had been offered on the conference and district level. One of these memorials, "A Call For Decision" (p. 211 f), attacked the false fellowship principles of the Protest Committee Report, mailed to all pastors and teachers in June, 1958. This memorial, too, was by way of Scriptural correction offered to the Synod. As you are able to read, the memorials and admonition advising termination of fellowship were rejected by the adoption of the Report of Floor Committee No. 2 (pp. 194-197). "A Call for Decision" was soundly "disavowed" both as regards language and content. This can be taken only as a rejection of the Scriptural correction and admonition that has been offered over a period of years by many consecrated and concerned brethren in the Wisconsin Synod. Wisconsin has also shown itself determined to continue in its error despite admonition by delegating a committee, not to "study . . . what Scripture teaches concerning the boundary . . ." (p. 212, Res. No. 3), but to convince the minority of the correctness of the synod's position. This has been brought out in all of the meetings this committee has held with the signers of "A Call for Decision" and others.

After reading all the reports and proceedings of the past seven years, WHO WILL VENTURE TO SAY THAT THE WISCONSIN SYNOD HAS NOT BEEN ADMONISHED REPEATEDLY, PATIENTLY, AND FRATEERNALLY? But the synod continues on its chosen course and defends its position, in spite of all this Scriptural admonition and correction.

#### A R E P O R T

The meeting of last Tuesday, Feb. 9th., was such a meeting between the signers of "A Call For Decision" and others and the Committee appointed by the Conference of Presidents. At this meeting, it became even more evident to your pastor and to some others, that the majority in the synod, at least this official committee, is following the promptings of human reason rather than Scripture alone.

1. This committee claims there is no difference between the fellowship principles laid down in a "Report to the Protest Committee" and in "A Call For Decision". (See Ques. VI, B, 5). Committee No. 23, in its first report, found a difference and reported it to the convention. (Note: This report is not found in your Proceedings. It says: "It has become clear from lengthy discussions that the signers of the memorial, 'A Call For Decision' espouse a principle of terminating church fellowship which is at variance with the principle which we as a Synod have been following and which is again enunciated in a larger context in 'The Report to the Protest Committee.'") Furthermore, some congregations have terminated the call of their pastors because their pastors differ with the synod, which in itself is not a Scriptural reason. Only if they could successfully accuse their pastors of false doctrine would they have such Scriptural reason. But then they would have to admit that there is a difference between the position of these pastors and the position of the synod. Yet these congregations are issuing calls to and are accepting pastors from the synod, with the apparent blessing of the officials, even while the synod holds that "Termination of fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail."
2. This committee defends the gross lack of "vigorously protesting fellowship" (See Ques. VI, B, 6) by greatly emphasizing the "where necessary" of the 1956 resolutions, in spite of the fact that Wisconsin has always dealt with Missouri as a corporate body, and not as individual members of a church body. This amounts to what is condemned in Synodical Conference circles as "selective fellowship." The synod has often, if not always,



used the term "corporate body of Missouri" over against those in its own midst who felt that Wisconsin was accusing or questioning the faith of individual persons in Missouri. In 1955 the Preamble was careful to charge Missouri only on the basis of its "official resolutions, policies, and practices." Letters of admonition were always directed either to the Missouri Synod itself or to its officially chosen representatives, who act for the synod when it is not in session. Memorials were directed to the conventions themselves. The Floor Committee of 1957 (Proc., p. 114) made it very clear that Wisconsin was dealing with official Missouri when it said, "We want it to be known that we do not hereby consider members of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as heathen and publicans, but that we are dealing with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod as a corporate body." But now the "where necessary" of 1956 is being stressed, and the conclusion is drawn that human reason must decide where it is necessary.

3. This committee with which we met also contends that, since the synod did not pass the resolution to terminate fellowship in 1955, but held it in abeyance, the synod also held in abeyance the judgment, or the Preamble to that resolution. Therefore, the committee holds, the synod is no longer charging Missouri with "persistent adherence to unionistic practices," and that consequently Romans 16, 17-18 does not now apply to the Missouri Synod. The committee claims that this was also the understanding of the delegates at the 1955 convention when they voted to delay for a year. It would seem clear, however, to anyone who reads the report of the action (1955 Proc., p. 87) as it did to many of the delegates and still does today, that the judgment of "persistent adherence" definitely applied at that time, but that the synod voted not to obey the Lord's apostolic injunction to "avoid." If it were true, the committee holds, that the synod would have done the "marking" without "avoiding," then the synod would have committed sin against God's clear Word. The committee contends, however, that the synod did not sin in 1955, because it was understood by all that the judgment of the Preamble, they say, did not apply at that time, but would apply in 1956, if there were no change in Missouri's position. HERE IS WHERE THE REAL TROUBLE BEGAN. Many of us do contend that the synod split the Bible passage, Rom. 16, 17, by "marking" the Missouri synod as causers of divisions and offences, and doing this unanimously, and then failing to "avoid" as God's Word demands. That is the reason that so many, by means of the spoken and written word, have charged Wisconsin with living in sin by failing to obey all the command of God.

4. It should also be stated that, while some of those who were present last Tuesday did not state their convictions one way or another, at least one of these, after hearing the discussion, arose and publicly stated that there is an evident difference between the majority and the minority in the Wisconsin Synod in their approach to the whole matter. Such a difference can exist only if there is also a different approach to the clear Word of God. Furthermore, the committee was asked to supply a passage from the Bible which gives us permission to continue in fellowship with those who have been correctly noted as causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. Although an attempt was made, no passage that applied to the situation was offered.

Those of us who have enjoyed the educational facilities and the fellowship of the Wisconsin Synod for many years, in some cases for a lifetime, are deeply grieved. It is with very heavy hearts that we are forced, on the basis of the facts in the case, to make the observation that this committee and the synod it represents are apparently placing human reason and fleshly emotions alongside, and even above, the authority of the Holy Bible. This is an intolerable situation for the humble child of God.

The Lord our God says: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 66, 2.

(Note: We hope that most of you have kept your District and Synod Proceedings over the last years and that you will look up and study the references made in these questions. You are encouraged to study the entire reports on Doctrinal Matters in each of the Proceedings, so that you may have the complete picture. This will often include also a portion of the President's Report at the beginning.)



VIII. What have been the results of such patient and brotherly admonition?

- A. The Missouri Synod has consistently either disregarded or denied Wisconsin's charges and admonition; at the same time, her offences have not only continued, but in many cases have been aggravated.

1. Statements which show that Wisconsin's charges have been disregarded.

"In general it may be said that our several requests were courteously but definitely declined," by Missouri's 1953 convention. (1953 Proc., p. 99)

"We hold that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod . . . by its failure to heed our admonition in some matters (Scouting, Joint Prayer, Suspension of Negotiations). . . has disrupted the Synodical Conference . . ." (1953 Proc., p. 101)

"The Missouri Synod has consistently declined to retract . . . has persisted in carrying forward its negotiations with the ALC in spite of our pleas." (1953 Proc., p. 103)

"We deplore the specific resolutions which our sister synod passed on the issues of Scouting and military chaplaincy; its stand on prayer fellowship; and the fact that several other issues were not acted upon at all, e.g., the communion agreement with the National Lutheran Council." (1956 Proc., p. 75)

"The reasons given . . . for deferring action on the 'Statement on the Antichrist' . . . is not in agreement with the mode of procedure suggested by the Synodical Conference . . ." (1959 Proc., p. 173)

2. Statements which show that Wisconsin's charges and admonitions have been denied.

"We hold that the LC-MS . . . by declining early action on our objections to the Common Confession . . . has disrupted the Synodical Conference . . ." (1953 Proc., p. 101)

"This assertion was denied by the Missouri Synod spokesmen . . ." (1954 Proc., p. 37)

"The charges which we brought . . . have been definitely denied." (1955 Proc., p. 13)

"The report . . . indicates no change . . . but rather the confirmed position of the Mo. Synod men that our admonitions and charges are 'due to an inadequate understanding of the pertinent Bible passages.'" (1955 Proc., p. 80)

"We deplore the fact that our testimony has not been heeded by the Mo. Synod. On the contrary, we find that our testimony is being openly repudiated by Mo. Synod representatives, and are now publicly being accused of misapplying Scriptures and of bringing false charges against the Mo. Synod . . . Dr. John W. Behnken: 'We do not admit the charges. On the contrary, we emphatically deny them.'" (1955 Proc., p. 81)

". . . the Missouri Synod representatives were not ready to acknowledge the Scriptural correctness of the basic point of our Wisconsin Synod presentation." (1959 Proc., p. 165)

"We countered that through such action the Missouri Synod would not be upholding our testimony that such prayer is unionistic, but rather accentuate before the NLC bodies that the Missouri Synod does not share our Scriptural position in this matter." (1959 Proc., p. 169)

Of Missouri's "sound and realistic" policy regarding Scouting: "This is the language of one who is demanding recognition for his stand . . ." (1959 Proc., p. 174)

3. Statements recognizing that the offences continue.

"Negotiations continued in spite of our objections and warnings." (1953 Proc., p. 103)

". . . without changing the prevailing situation . . . still anxiously and prayerfully await an indication that the LC-MS will not persist . . . This hope has not been fulfilled." (1955 Proc., p. 79)



"The report of our men indicates no change on the part of the MoI Synod . . . there still is no indication that the divisions and offenses caused by the Mo. Synod's resolutions . . . will be removed." (1955 Proc., p. 81)

". . . many of the controversial issues . . . still remain wholly unresolved . . . the sister synod's position . . . has not undergone any change."

". . . our Synod da . . . dare not lose sight of the constant offence which the continuance of the differences in practice is creating." (1956 Proc., p. 70,71)

". . . the question of unionism and the controversial issues listed in our Synod's 1953 resolutions in themselves still remain unresolved. . ." (1956 Proc., p. 74)

". . . the issues raised by the Common Confession must still be considered as forming a definite part of the status controversies existing within the Synodical Conference."

". . . the controversial issues still remain wholly unresolved and continue to cause offense." (1957 Proc., pp. 134-135)

#### 4. Statements recognizing that the offences have been aggravated.

"We hold that the LC-MS by its 'deviating to an ever increasing extent from the position we have so long held and defended together,' . . . has disrupted the Synodical Conference . . ." (1953 Proc., p. 101)

"Difference in practice have increased and multiplied. . . The differences that have arisen between us . . . have not been removed. They have increased." (1955 Proc., p. 13)

". . . has intensified these divisions and offenses. . ." (1955 Proc., p. 85)

"This resolution recognizes the fact that the Boy Scout of America must not be classed with lodges and should therefore no longer be an object of official study by the Commission of Fraternal Organizations; that rather the Board for Young People's Work be directed to give proper guidance to congregations that sponsor Boy Scout troupes."

". . . on an official basis the LC-MS has since the 1956 convention in St. Paul involved itself in just such cooperative programs . . . of which it said in its resolution that they would involve it 'in union in spiritual matters with groups not in doctrinal agreement with us.'" (1957 Proc., p. 143)

"It is to be regretted that, while action on the 'Statement on the Antichrist' was deferred, the approval of the Report of the Advisory Committee on Doctrine and Practice (ADCP) as revised in 1956, which in part deals also with this matter, was reaffirmed." (1959 Proc., p. 173)

#### B. The Wisconsin Synod, since 1953, has rejected the admonition and protests of its own members by majority vote, has endeavored to defend its unscriptural position with human logic and reasoning, and has disavowed the principles of fellowship taught in the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and its own Catechism.

1. The resolutions passed by the majority of delegates at each of the conventions since 1953 are the answer to those who have been admonishing the synod for a greater or lesser period of time. (See, for example, Resolution No. 7, 1959 Proc., p. 197)
2. The "Report to the Protest Committee" (received by pastors and teachers), which endeavors to justify and defend the synod's several decisions not to terminate fellowship with the Missouri Synod and Wisconsin's present negotiations with that synod, uses human logic and reasoning throughout. Except for a reference to Rom. 16,17, there is not one Scripture passage used to support what it says; and even this passage and its application to the situation is placed in the realm of "human judgment." This "Report" was accepted last August as the synod's official interpretation.
3. The "termination of fellowship" principles outlined in "A Call for Decision" are the principles of Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Wisconsin Catechism, Questions 246 - 250. Without taking the time to study the whole issue, including the "Report to the Protest Committee," the convention resolved to disavow both the language and the content of "A Call for Decision," thus actually disavowing the Lutheran Confessions and the Holy Scriptures on this point.

BOTH MISSOURI AND WISCONSIN, THEN, HAVE REJECTED ALL SCRIPTURAL AND FRATERNAL ADMONITION.



(Note: Part B of the answer to question VIII on the previous page is somewhat unclear. Lift out the words "by majority vote" and place them after "The Wisconsin Synod". Also insert the words "of many" after the words "admonition and protests". It will then read: "The Wisconsin Synod by majority vote, since 1953, has rejected the admonition and protests of many of its own members, . . .").

IX. What is there left for the faithful Christian to do after his Scriptural admonition has been disregarded and rejected and the offences, against which he has been protesting, continue as before and are aggravated?

A. The naked Word of God, which needs no human interpretation, answers this question clearly and unmistakeably.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matt. 7, 15.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Rom. 16, 17.

"If any man teach otherwise . . .; from such withdraw thyself." I Tim. 6, 3-5.

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Titus 3, 10.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." II John 10.

B. The naked Word of God also gives the reasons for which faithful Christians must take such action.

". . . inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matt. 7, 15.

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. 16, 18.

"For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." II John 11.

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" I Cor. 5, 6.

"Their word will eat as doth a canker." II Tim. 2, 17.

C. Learners of the Word, those who are weak and erring brethren, are to be dealt with in all patience and meekness.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6, 1.

Thus Jesus dealt with His disciples and Paul with the Christians at Rome, Corinth, and in Galatia in their weakness of faith and lack of knowledge in spiritual things.

D. Teachers, errorists who continue to make propaganda for their error after they have been duly admonished and who try to win followers for their error and who cause divisions and offences by their error, are to be rejected and avoided.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Rom. 16, 17.

Thus Jesus dealt with the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees who were teachers of error; and thus Paul dealt with the Jews (Judaizers) who were misleading simple Christians in the congregations he and his colleagues had founded.

Note: Anyone who tries to win followers or makes propaganda for his beliefs, whether he be in the pulpit or in the pew, thereby becomes a teacher. A false teacher is to be recognized by his teaching. "Beware of false prophets . . . Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matt. 7, 15, 16.

"It is persistent, habitual errorists who are to be avoided, not weak brethren. Every orthodox group has errors in its midst due to the weakness of the flesh. The Galatians



had fallen into error under the spell of the Judaizers, yet Paul called them brethren. They were still open to conviction. They were willing to be corrected by the apostolic teaching when it was applied to them. But it is different with those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the Word, who make propaganda for their false teachings, who have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that, in spite of all instruction and admonition, they will not give up their errors but are determined to uphold them and spread them. Then the time has come to 'avoid'.

Im. P. Frey, in his essay: "JOINT PRAYER", presented at the Missouri - Wisconsin Synod Presidents' Conference, January 12-15, 1954.

X. Since St. John's Congregation has bound itself to God's Word, how shall it obey these clear and unmistakable commands of God in a practical way?

A. Our congregation has bound itself to God's Word in its Constitution.

"This congregation confesses and accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God . . ." Article II. Confession.

"Only such can become members of this congregation, and enjoy the privileges of said congregation, as: 2) declare their adherence to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, without qualification, as the only norm of faith and life."  
Article IV. Membership.

B. Since St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation is bound to obey the Holy Scriptures without qualification as the only norm of faith and life; and

Since the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, in spite of Scriptural, fraternal, and patient admonition and correction, continues to cause divisions and offences by its official resolutions, policies and practices not in accord with the Holy Scriptures, particularly with regard to the matter of church fellowship; and

Since in all Scripture there is not a single text permitting a child of God to fellowship with teachers who depart from the Word of God;

In obedience to the command of our Lord in Romans 16, 17-18 and in order to protect ourselves and our children from losing the true Gospel through the truth-destroying leaven and cancer of unionism, we can do nothing else but to terminate the fellowship we have cherished for so many years with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod until she removes the error from her midst in a thoroughly Scriptural and mutually acceptable manner.

We want it to be known that we do not by this action consider members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod as heathen and publicans, but that we are dealing with the official Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod as a corporate body.

With the hope of reestablishing unity of doctrine and practice where it does not now exist, we stand ready to discuss the issues that divide us with representatives of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod on a non-fraternal basis.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will return, by the grace of God, to a firm Scriptural stand, so that we may all speak the same thing, so that there may be no divisions among us, and so that we may be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. I Corinthians 1, 10.

C. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10, 27.

"He (Jesus) answered and said unto them, My Mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." Luke 8, 21.

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11, 28.

TO GOD ALONE BE GLORY

February 28, 1960  
Hancock, Minnesota

*E. Hallauer*  
E. Hallauer, pastor